LITTLE CALUMET WETLAND IS OUR NEWEST ACQUISITION
NiSource Charitable Foundation Provides Grant

Shirley Heinze Land Trust’s newest acquisition is a 30-acre property along the Little Calumet River in Westchester Township, adjacent to the north Porter County community of Chesterton. The river bisects this new nature preserve, which includes some old oxbows and a variety of wetland habitats. Floodplain comprises much of the property, but it also contains upland woods and areas dominated by shrubs and sedges. It is a haven for wildlife and a prime fishing spot for anglers out for trout and salmon.

The Heinze Trust has been pursuing this property for two years, and early this year we signed a purchase agreement contingent on acquisition of sufficient funds to complete the deal. The breakthrough in our fundraising efforts came in June when the NiSource Charitable Foundation announced a $50,000 grant. The check was formally presented at the Heinze Trust’s annual summer benefit by Don Babcock, director of economic development for the Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO). He also announced a dollar-for-dollar match up to an additional $25,000 for all individual donations pledged at the event. At evening’s end, we had raised more than $100,000 for the project.

“We are grateful for the long-standing commitment to land conservation taken by NIPSCO and its parent corporation, NiSource,” says executive director Kris Krouse. “We’ve developed a strong relationship over the years, and we are grateful for the support they have provided for many of our restoration and educational projects.”

“This new property,” continues Krouse, “offers many unique opportunities. It is located within sight of Brummitt Elementary School, and we look forward to working with faculty and students there to develop it as an outdoor learning laboratory. We also anticipate making the property accessible for a variety of recreational uses, including canoeing, hiking, birding, nature study, and photography. It’s a terrific addition to our land holdings and a great resource for the community.”

The preservation of this property also adds a boost to efforts to promote watershed protection and flood control along this important waterway. Several public and private entities protect land along the Little Calumet. The river’s headwaters are located in a dedicated state nature preserve at Red Mill County Park in LaPorte County. Other protected riparian habitat on the Little Calumet occurs in the Heron Rookery and Bailly/Chellberg units of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, and in properties owned by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Coffee Creek Watershed Conservancy, and the Town of Porter Parks Department. ☼
It was a wrong turn 10 years ago that first brought Mark Klein and Mary Wagner to the Indiana Dunes. “We were driving back to Chicago from Michigan, and we got lost in Beverly Shores,” says Mary. “We drove through the dunes and to the lake, and we knew right away that this was where we wanted our second home.” Within two years they had their own place there. That simple navigational error changed their lives and was a stroke of good luck for Shirley Heinze Land Trust.

Mark and Mary both grew up in the greater Chicago area, and they met each other in a camera shop while still teenagers. Each went on to earn a degree in photography – Mark at Illinois-Chicago and Mary at Northern Illinois. After several years working for other companies, they founded their own business in 2004. MK Films Corp, based in Chicago, is a production facility for television commercials. The couple still maintains a home in Chicago, and Mark devotes much of his time to the business.

Like many before them, Mark and Mary can trace their association with Shirley Heinze back to an encounter with life board member Barbara Plampin. It was a guided walk through the McAllister Prairie project area, and Mary emerged from the experience anxious to learn more about the diverse plant life of the Dunes and enamored of Barbara’s botanic expertise. “When I grow up,” she confides, “I want to be Barbara Plampin.”

“We really love Shirley Heinze,” says Mark. “We appreciate how they operate on a smaller scale than big national groups, and that they pursue their work fearlessly and boldly.” Over the years Mark and Mary have participated in many Heinze Trust activities – hikes, workdays, prescribed burns – and they generously support our fundraising drives and events. “The mission of preserving natural lands has great appeal for us,” adds Mary, “and we’re very impressed with the caliber of the people involved with the Heinze Trust.”

Botany has become an increasingly important part of Mary’s life. She recently produced a book, A Beginner’s Guide to the Plants of the Indiana Dunes, for Beverly Shores residents. Moreover, her fascination with plant life has steered her life in an entirely new direction. She is studying Chinese herbal medicine at the Chicago College of Healing Arts, and she hopes one day to practice her skills professionally.

Mark Klein and Mary Wagner recently celebrated 20 years together; they are two talented, interesting people with a strong sense of their place in and responsibility to the natural world. We’re delighted to have formed a partnership with them and look forward to many more years of working together. ☼
**BP employees lend a hand**

British Petroleum’s Whiting Refinery provided a volunteer crew for our June 20th workday at Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve in Gary. Ten BP employees joined other volunteers and SHLT staff to spend the day working on our ongoing savanna restoration project at the site. They planted some 600 prairie wildflower plugs, including rough blazing star, savanna blazing star, western sunflower, wild bergamot, and showy goldenrod. Workers were treated to a cookout lunch provided by BP.

“This was our first-ever collaboration with local industry on a workday project,” says SHLT volunteer coordinator Jim Erdelac, “and I think it was a great success. Brad Etlin, BP’s Director of Government & Public Affairs, contacted us this spring about possible partnership opportunities. This event was a direct result of those discussions. The BP volunteers were enthusiastic workers and seemed genuinely interested in our efforts to restore this globally rare dune-and-swale preserve.”

“BP warmly welcomes the opportunity to help improve the communities where we live, work, and raise our families,” comments Etlin. “The volunteer hours we’ve invested at Ivanhoe South demonstrate our support for the invaluable work that Shirley Heinze is doing. Our volunteers appreciate the chance to donate their weekend hours to support the communities that support them. This project also provides a terrific opportunity for our employees, friends, and family to spend some time in the great outdoors.”

A second BP workday has already been scheduled for the fall, this time at Cressmoor Prairie Nature Preserve, a tallgrass prairie site in Hobart. Volunteers will collect seeds of native grasses and forbs from 10am to 3pm. That event, open to the general public as well, has been organized in recognition of National Public Lands Day.

“We’re very pleased with the success of the first BP workday,” notes SHLT stewardship manager Paul Quinlan. “We hope to develop a long-term relationship with BP and start similar partnerships with other major corporations. Volunteers play a key role in our efforts to preserve and restore natural land in the Calumet Region, and industrial workers have lots of skills to offer. We welcome their efforts, and we’re anxious to include them and their families among our supporters.”

Shirley Heinze Land Trust sponsors public workdays about once a month on its nature preserves. Check the schedule on page 5 or on our website, and give it a try!

**Burnham-to-Marquette expedition blazes new Lake Michigan water trail**

The Northwest Indiana Paddling Association, a non-profit recreational organization headed by SHLT board member Dan Plath, inaugurated the new Southern Lake Michigan Water Trail with a two-day expedition from downtown Chicago to Michigan City, June 13-14, 2009. Some 35 sea kayakers participated, completing all or part of the new blueway route, which was mapped out under the auspices of the Northwest Indiana Regional Planning Commission and its member organizations.

Paddlers encountered choppy waters and less than ideal weather conditions over part of the course, but they were greeted at scheduled stops by warm welcomes, food and entertainment provided by sponsoring organizations and communities. The Heinze Trust was one of the sponsors, and executive director Kris Krouse briefed participants on our restoration work as they took a break at Beverly Shores on the expedition’s second day.

Dubbed the Burnham-to-Marquette Expedition, the event commemorated the centennial of Daniel Burnham’s Plan for Chicago, a groundbreaking experiment in urban planning that is credited with saving much of Chicago’s lakefront for recreational use. At the same time, the expedition demonstrated support for the Marquette Plan, an ongoing effort to make Indiana’s Lake Michigan shoreline more accessible to the public.

“A major purpose for this event,” notes Plath, “was to make people aware of all of the good things we have going on in this area. It resulted from a collaboration of many groups and communities, all of them determined to promote the recreational use of Lake Michigan. This could not have happened without our many sponsors and supporters. Everybody really partnered and went out of their way to make it a success.”
Shirley Heinze Land Trust has entered into a collaborative agreement with Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History and the Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center to introduce the Mighty Acorns educational program to classrooms of the 4th through 6th grades in the Hobart City Schools.

The Mighty Acorns program was developed in 1993 by the Chicago Wilderness consortium. Its aim is to connect urban youth with nature through direct involvement in stewardship activities in local natural areas. Since then, the program has been implemented in schools throughout the Chicago region.

Our initial involvement with the program will take place in September when five teachers from Hobart’s Ridgeview and Liberty Elementary Schools undertake training in the curriculum. SHLT stewardship assistant Jim Erdelac will work with the teachers to facilitate on-site activities at Shirley Heinze properties in Hobart. Tasks to be performed by students will include seed collection, brush cutting, and planting. We hope to involve five classrooms during this coming school year and build from there.

The Mighty Acorns program demonstrates our ongoing commitment to environmental education for our school children. We hope it will broaden community involvement in the protection and restoration of natural areas and lay the groundwork for a new generation of dedicated conservationists to carry on our work in coming years.

The Indiana Heritage Trust, a state agency funded largely through the sale of environmental license plates, has given its approval to a multi-partner effort to acquire a 90-acre addition to SHLT’s Ambler Flatwoods Nature Preserve in LaPorte County. Other partners are The Nature Conservancy, the National Resource Damage Fund, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Nature Preserves. Final closing on the property will occur before the end of 2009.

The addition will increase our holdings at Ambler to nearly 300 acres, making it by far our largest preserve. The new property includes floodplain forest and partially reforested agricultural land. Ambler Flatwoods was dedicated as a state nature preserve in 2006. It protects the state’s largest intact example of boreal flatwoods, one of Indiana’s rarest natural communities, and it harbors numerous plant species rarely encountered in the state or the Chicago region.

This will be Shirley Heinze Land Trust’s sixth Indiana Heritage Trust project.

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Wish List
Cordless drill

Don't have tools or equipment to donate? Consider making a monetary donation ...
- for the truck fund, which has been established in anticipation of replacing our truck.
- to purchase a particular piece of equipment.

Contributions to the Heinze Land Trust are tax deductible. Call us at (219) 879-4725.
In January 2008 we began a major restoration project at Bur Oak Woods Nature Preserve in Hobart. This rare bur oak savanna remnant had become overgrown and degraded due to a history of fire suppression, grazing, and invasion by non-native species. With a $3,000 grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, we hired a contractor to mechanically clear brush and small trees to restore the savanna structure on 10 acres of the property, the first step in returning the habitat to its full potential.

That investment has paid off in a big way. Indeed, it has propelled SHLT’s restoration activities at the site to a new level of success. Building on that first 10 acres, the project has really snowballed in terms of partnerships, funding, and volunteer efforts. That initial grant was followed by a $5,000 grant from the NiSource Environmental Challenge Fund, a $6,000 grant from Chicago Wilderness, and a paddle auction that raised $11,750 at our 2008 summer benefit. These monies have allowed us to control re-sprouts of undesirable trees and shrubs, begin a long-term vegetation monitoring program at the site, conduct a controlled burn, and install a native seed mix to re-establish the herbaceous plant community. In addition, we were able to hire a contractor to clear another 15 acres of overgrown savanna with forestry mowing equipment.

Momentum continues to build. A generous $30,000 grant was awarded in May 2009 by the Sustain Our Great Lakes Program – a private-public partnership comprising ArcelorMittal, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service, coordinated by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. SHLT could not have secured this grant without the support of our donors and partners. The grant funds match SHLT funds (raised at the paddle auction), SHLT volunteer hours donated, and “in-kind” services pledged by the Hobart Fire Department (HFD) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Nature Preserves. HFD will provide personnel and equipment to assist at controlled burns, and DNR will assist us with chainsaw work, herbicide treatments, and vegetation sampling. This new grant and its associated partnerships will allow us to complete the work already begun and expand the restoration to an additional 20 acres of savanna habitat, bringing the total to 45 acres at the 84-acre site.

Showcasing this project is easier now, too. The recent installation of a small trailhead parking lot in the southwest corner of the property, made possible by a $5,000 grant from the Efroymson Family Fund, provides safer access for staff, volunteers, and visitors.

~ Paul Quinlan

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<th>VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS</th>
<th>Contact Jim at 219-879-4725, or check our website <a href="http://www.heinzetrust.org">www.heinzetrust.org</a> for details &amp; directions.</th>
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<td>August 8</td>
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You can also contact Jim Erdelac for volunteer work assignments that fit your schedule. He can get you started on an independent project, or you may be able to work as part of the crew for a day. Reach him at the office at 219-879-4725 or by e-mail volunteer@heinzetrust.org.
Our vision of turning Ivanhoe South Nature Preserve into an outdoor classroom is coming closer to fruition. The Legacy Foundation of Lake County offered to match dollar-for-dollar the first $2,500 in donations raised for the project, and we easily exceeded that amount with proceeds from a special direct-mail fundraising appeal this spring. We are well on our way!

Located in the Brunswick neighborhood on Gary’s west side, Ivanhoe South is one of only a handful of protected parcels of globally rare dune-and-swale landscape. Longtime residents of the area can hardly recognize the 32-acre property. What was an informal dumping ground just a few years ago has – under SHLT stewardship – been transformed into splendid savanna habitat.

We still have much restoration work to accomplish at the preserve, and we have hopes of adding more acreage to the property in the near future. Maintaining Ivanhoe South as a healthy natural area will always be our major objective there. But we also have more human goals at Ivanhoe South. We want to make the preserve more accessible to the public, and we want to develop programs with the Gary City Schools to introduce nature study to children there.

Shirley Heinze Land Trust wants to create an outdoor classroom where students and community members can explore and learn about the wonders of nature right in their own backyard. This will require trailhead infrastructure improvements – an enhanced informational kiosk, interpretive signs, improved trail maintenance. And we want to install a small parking area to accommodate school buses and casual visitors.

We still need your assistance to make this dream come true. Show your support by sending a check designated for the Ivanhoe South Initiative. For a gift of $150, your support will be recognized with a 4” x 8” engraved paving brick placed at the trailhead. Gifts at the $250 or $500 level will be recognized with a 12” x 12” paver. It’s a great opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to land preservation in Northwest Indiana or to remember a loved one. Please contact the office at 219.879.4725 to learn more and participate in this exciting project. With your help we can make this happen! ☼

Join the Legacy Circle

There is no better or more painless way to demonstrate your support for the work of Shirley Heinze Land Trust than by including us in your estate plan.

- Make a charitable bequest in your will. This can be a fixed dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or specific designated property, such as real estate or securities.
- Designate SHLT as beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan.
- Name SHLT as beneficiary of your insurance policy.
- Contact your county’s community foundation about other options.

We have at least 17 members in the Legacy Circle. Why not consult with your financial planner, and join now?
Showcasing a hidden gem
Community Hike at Green Heron Pond

Hidden away in a pleasant residential section of Gary’s Miller neighborhood lies a 10-acre nature preserve unknown to most of its neighbors. That anonymity is why we selected Green Heron Pond as the site for our 2009 community hike. We invited the neighbors to drop by on a pleasant July morning for guided tours of the property and an opportunity to learn about our work while enjoying complimentary refreshments.

Located just blocks from the Lake Michigan shoreline, Green Heron Pond Nature Preserve is a diverse site featuring high dune, savanna, oak forest, and most spectacularly, a permanent interdunal pond. The pond supports a variety of wildlife, including fish, frogs, turtles, muskrats, and waterfowl. As its name implies, herons – both green and great blue – are frequent visitors during the warmer months, and a great assortment of songbirds finds refuge in the woods, especially during migration periods.

SHLT’s community hikes have become an annual tradition. Each year we schedule an event at one of our preserves in an effort to increase awareness in the communities in which we work. We are grateful to advisory council member Lee Botts, a neighbor who serves as steward for the property, for her assistance in making this event a success.

Land trust partnership takes on conservation planning for moraine forest

Shirley Heinze Land Trust, in conjunction with Save the Dunes Conservation Fund and LaPorte County Conservation Trust, is undertaking a comprehensive conservation planning project to guide efforts to protect land in the moraine forest of LaPorte and Porter Counties. The project is being funded by grants from the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the Land Trust Alliance, and the Indiana Lake Michigan Coastal Program, along with contributions from the three land trust partners.

The moraine forest is situated on the Valparaiso Moraine, a terminal moraine deposited during the last glaciation. It is characterized by rich mesic soils that support several species of hardwoods, including beech, sugar maple, red oak, white oak, black cherry, black walnut, and hackberry. Populations of spring ephemeral wildflowers are rich and dense on sites that have had little disturbance. The headwaters of several streams that are tributaries of Lake Michigan are located within the moraine forest. Wetlands and streams punctuate the tree cover throughout the area and provide crucial habitat for wildlife.

The initial step in this planning effort involves the identification of moraine forest parcels and the collection of GIS data. A multi-layered map of the area will result, providing the basis for long-term conservation planning. This initial step should be completed by the middle of 2010.

The moraine forest project follows in the footsteps of the Boreal Flatwoods Conservation Planning Project, which the Heinze Trust completed earlier this year, with support from the Land Trust Alliance. Focusing on the rare boreal flatwoods ecosystem in northern LaPorte County, it was the first effort of its kind in our region. We produced informational brochures describing the significance of boreal flatwoods and our efforts to preserve them. These were distributed to landowners in the area, and we have already seen positive results, which we hope will lead to future land acquisitions.
Dear Supporters,

Like everyone else, Shirley Heinze Land Trust was affected by the economic downturn in 2008. Annual appeal income was down approximately 12% from the previous year, and our investment portfolio suffered a substantial decline. The beginning of 2009 was also wobbly. The stock market continued to plummet, and many nonprofits were forced to make major budgetary cutbacks, including employee layoffs. Fortunately, to date, we have managed to avoid any layoff or furlough of our employees.

So how did we get through it? We focused on making our programs and strategies more efficient and practical. We diversified our sources of income and relied less on grants. A healthy endowment of $1.2 million helped us weather the storm. We also continued to build our base of committed donors, increasing the number of people who give regularly and significantly.

Despite the national economic downturn, our local economy has been relatively stable. The housing market has been strong, and we have seen an increase in the number of people interested in nature conservation. Our annual appeal income was down 12% from the previous year, but we were still able to raise $2.3 million, which is a significant achievement in this economic climate.

We are grateful for the support of our donors and the community at large. We know that we will continue to face challenges in the future, but we are confident that we will overcome them with the help of our committed supporters. Together, we can make a real difference in the world.

Sincerely,

Kristopher Krouse

Shirley Heinze Land Trust

Founded 1981

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Michigan City, IN 46360

www.heinzetrust.org